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- (2) Reduces erosion;
- (3) Improves soil fertility and tilth;
- (4) Interrupts pest cycles; and
- (5) Reduces depletion of soil moisture or otherwise reduces the need for irrigation in applicable areas.

Secretary means the Secretary of the USDA.

Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher means a producer who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities. These groups consist of American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. Gender alone is not a covered group for the purposes of NRCS conservation programs. A socially disadvantaged applicant is an individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. For an entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals.

State Conservationist means the NRCS employee authorized to implement CSP and direct and supervise NRCS activities in a State, the Caribbean Area, or the Pacific Islands Area.

State Technical Committee means a committee established by the Secretary in a State pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 3861.

Stewardship threshold means the level of natural resource conservation and environmental management required, as determined by NRCS using conservation measurement tools, to conserve and improve the quality and condition of a natural resource.

Technical assistance means technical expertise, information, and tools necessary for the conservation of natural resources on land active in agricultural, forestry, or related uses. The term includes the following:

- (1) Technical services provided directly to farmers, ranchers, and other eligible entities, such as conservation planning, technical consultation, and

assistance with design and implementation of conservation activities; and

- (2) Technical infrastructure, including processes, tools and agency functions needed to support delivery of technical services, such as technical standards, resource inventories, training, data, technology, monitoring, and effects analyses.

Technical Service Provider (TSP) means an individual, private-sector entity, or public agency certified by NRCS to provide technical services to program participants, in lieu of or on behalf of NRCS as referenced in 7 CFR part 652.

§ 1470.4 Allocation and management.

- (a) The Chief will allocate acres and associated funds to State Conservationists, based:

- (1) Primarily on each State's proportion of eligible land to the total amount of eligible land in all States; and

- (2) On consideration of—

- (i) The extent and magnitude of the conservation needs associated with agricultural production in each State,

- (ii) The degree to which implementation of the program in the State is, or will be, effective in helping producers address those needs, and

- (iii) Other considerations determined by the Chief, to achieve equitable geographic distribution of program participation.

- (b) In any fiscal year, acres allocated to a State that are not enrolled by a date determined by the Chief, may be reallocated with associated funds to another State for use in that fiscal year under CSP.

§ 1470.5 Outreach activities.

- (a) NRCS will establish program outreach activities at the national, State, and local levels to ensure that potential applicants who control eligible land are aware and informed that they may be eligible to apply for program assistance.

- (b) Special outreach will be made to eligible producers with historically low participation rates, including but not restricted to, beginning farmers or ranchers, limited resource producers, and socially disadvantaged farmers or

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ranchers, Indian Tribes, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders.

(c) NRCS will ensure that outreach is provided so as not to limit producer participation because of size or type or operation, or production system, including specialty crop and organic production.

§ 1470.6 Eligibility requirements.

(a) *Eligible applicant.* To be eligible to participate in CSP, at the time of application, an applicant must meet all the following requirements:

(1) Be the operator in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm records management system for the agricultural operation being offered for enrollment in the program. Potential applicants that are not in the FSA farm records management system must establish records with FSA prior to application. Potential applicants whose records are not current in the FSA farm records management system must update those records with FSA prior to application;

(2) Have documented control of the land for the term of the proposed contract unless an exception is made by the Chief in the case of land allotted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Indian lands, or other instances in which the Chief determines that there is sufficient assurance of control;

(3) Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions found at 7 CFR part 12;

(4) Be in compliance with Adjusted Gross Income provisions found at 7 CFR part 1400;

(5) Supply information, as required by NRCS, to determine eligibility for the program, including but not limited to, information related to eligibility requirements and ranking factors; conservation activity and production system records; information to verify the applicant's status as a beginning farmer and rancher or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, if applicable; and payment eligibility as established by 7 CFR part 1400; and

(6) Provide a list of all members of the legal entity and embedded entities along with members' tax identification numbers and percentage interest in the entity. Where applicable, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders may use another unique identi-

fication number for each individual eligible for payment.

(b) *Eligible land.* A contract application must include the eligible land on an applicant's entire agricultural operation, except as identified in paragraph (b)(3) of this section. The land as described below is part of the agricultural operation, and eligible for enrollment and payment under CSP:

(1) Private agricultural land;

(2) Agricultural Indian lands; and

(3) Nonindustrial private forest land (NIPF).

(i) By special rule in the statute, NIPF is eligible land.

(ii) No more than 10 percent of the acres enrolled nationally in any fiscal year may be NIPF.

(iii) The applicant will designate by submitting a separate application if they want to offer NIPF for funding consideration.

(iv) If designated for funding consideration, then the NIPF component of the operation will include all the applicant's NIPF. If not designated for funding consideration, then the applicant's NIPF will not be part of the agricultural operation.

(c) *Ineligible land.* The following ineligible lands are part of the agricultural operation, but ineligible for inclusion in the contract or for payment in CSP:

(1) Land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, 7 CFR part 1410;

(2) Land enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program, 7 CFR part 1467;

(3) Land enrolled in the Grassland Reserve Program, 7 CFR part 1415;

(4) Land enrolled in the Conservation Security Program, 7 CFR part 1469;

(5) Public land including land owned by a Federal, State, or local unit of government; and

(6) Land used for crop production after June 18, 2008, that had not been planted, considered to be planted, or devoted to crop production for at least 4 of the 6 years preceding that date, unless that land—

(i) Had previously been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program,

(ii) Has been maintained using long-term crop rotation practices as determined by the Designated Conservationist, or

(iii) Is incidental land needed for efficient operation of the farm or ranch as